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53/243. Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

A

DECLARATION ON A CULTURE OF PEACE

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Charter of the United Nations, including the purposes and principles embodied therein,

Recalling also the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which states that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed",

Recalling further the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] and other relevant international instruments of the United Nations system,

Recognizing that peace not only is the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation,

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[1] Resolution 217 A (III).

Recognizing also that the end of the cold war has widened possibilities for strengthening a culture of peace,

Expressing deep concern about the persistence and proliferation of violence and conflict in various parts of the world,

Recognizing the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and intolerance, including those based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status,

Recalling its resolution 52/15 of 20 November 1997, by which it proclaimed the year 2000 as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace", and its resolution 53/25 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed the period 2001–2010 as the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World",

Recognizing the important role that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization continues to play in the promotion of a culture of peace,

Solemnly proclaims the present Declaration on a Culture of Peace to the end that Governments, international organizations and civil society may be guided in their activity by its provisions to promote and strengthen a culture of peace in the new millennium:

Article 1

A culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on:

(*a*) Respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation;

(*b*) Full respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and non-intervention in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law;

(*c*) Full respect for and promotion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(*d*) Commitment to peaceful settlement of conflicts;

(*e*) Efforts to meet the developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations;

(*f*) Respect for and promotion of the right to development;

(*g*) Respect for and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for women and men;

(*h*) Respect for and promotion of the right of everyone to freedom of expression, opinion and information;

(*i*) Adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations,

and fostered by an enabling national and international environment conducive to peace.

Article 2

Progress in the fuller development of a culture of peace comes about through values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life conducive to the promotion of peace among individuals, groups and nations.

Article 3

The fuller development of a culture of peace is integrally linked to:

(*a*) Promoting peaceful settlement of conflicts, mutual respect and understanding and international cooperation;

(*b*) Complying with international obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and international law;

(*c*) Promoting democracy, development and universal respect for and observance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(*d*) Enabling people at all levels to develop skills of dialogue, negotiation, consensus-building and peaceful resolution of differences;

(*e*) Strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring full participation in the development process;

(*f*) Eradicating poverty and illiteracy and reducing inequalities within and among nations;

(*g*) Promoting sustainable economic and social development;

(*h*) Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women through their empowerment and equal representation at all levels of decision-making;

(*i*) Ensuring respect for and promotion and protection of the rights of children;

(*j*) Ensuring free flow of information at all levels and enhancing access thereto;

(*k*) Increasing transparency and accountability in governance;

(*l*) Eliminating all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;

(*m*) Advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity among all civilizations, peoples and cultures, including towards ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

(*n*) Realizing fully the right of all peoples, including those living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, to self-determination enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and embodied in the International Covenants on Human Rights,[2] as well as in the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples contained in General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960.

Article 4

Education at all levels is one of the principal means to build a culture of peace. In this context, human rights education is of particular importance.

Article 5

Governments have an essential role in promoting and strengthening a culture of peace.

Article 6

Civil society needs to be fully engaged in fuller development of a culture of peace.

Article 7

The educative and informative role of the media contributes to the promotion of a culture of peace.

Article 8

A key role in the promotion of a culture of peace belongs to parents, teachers, politicians, journalists, religious bodies and groups, intellectuals, those engaged in scientific, philosophical and creative and artistic activities, health and humanitarian workers, social workers, managers at various levels as well as to non-governmental organizations.

Article 9

The United Nations should continue to play a critical role in the promotion and strengthening of a culture of peace worldwide.

107th plenary meeting
13 September 1999

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[2] Resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

B

PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON A CULTURE OF PEACE

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind the Declaration on a Culture of Peace adopted on 13 September 1999,

Recalling its resolution 52/15 of 20 November 1997, by which it proclaimed the year 2000 as the "International Year for the Culture of Peace", and its resolution 53/25 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed the period 2001–2010 as the "International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World",

Adopts the following Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace:

A. *Aims, strategies and main actors*

1. The Programme of Action should serve as the basis for the International Year for the Culture of Peace and the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

2. Member States are encouraged to take actions for promoting a culture of peace at the national level as well as at the regional and international levels.

3. Civil society should be involved at the local, regional and national levels to widen the scope of activities on a culture of peace.

4. The United Nations system should strengthen its ongoing efforts to promote a culture of peace.

5. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization should continue to play its important role in and make major contributions to the promotion of a culture of peace.

6. Partnerships between and among the various actors as set out in the Declaration should be encouraged and strengthened for a global movement for a culture of peace.

7. A culture of peace could be promoted through sharing of information among actors on their initiatives in this regard.

8. Effective implementation of the Programme of Action requires mobilization of resources, including financial resources, by interested Governments, organizations and individuals.

B. *Strengthening actions at the national, regional and international levels by all relevant actors*

9. Actions to foster a culture of peace through education:

(*a*) Reinvigorate national efforts and international cooperation to promote the goals of education for all with a view to achieving human, social and economic development and for promoting a culture of peace;

(*b*) Ensure that children, from an early age, benefit from education on the values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and of tolerance and non-discrimination;

(*c*) Involve children in activities designed to instill in them the values and goals of a culture of peace;

(*d*) Ensure equality of access to education for women, especially girls;

(*e*) Encourage revision of educational curricula, including textbooks, bearing in mind the 1995 Declaration and Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy[3] for which technical cooperation should be provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization upon request;

(*f*) Encourage and strengthen efforts by actors as identified in the Declaration, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, aimed at developing values and skills conducive to a culture of peace, including education and training in promoting dialogue and consensus-building;

(*g*) Strengthen the ongoing efforts of the relevant entities of the United Nations system aimed at training and education, where appropriate, in the areas of conflict prevention and crisis management, peaceful settlement of disputes, as well as in post-conflict peace-building;

(*h*) Expand initiatives to promote a culture of peace undertaken by institutions of higher education in various parts of the world, including the United Nations University, the University for Peace and the project for twinning universities and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Chairs Programme.

10. Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development:

(*a*) Undertake comprehensive actions on the basis of appropriate strategies and agreed targets to eradicate poverty through national and international efforts, including through international cooperation;

(*b*) Strengthen the national capacity for implementation of policies and programmes designed to reduce economic and social inequalities within nations through, *inter alia*, international cooperation;

(*c*) Promote effective and equitable development-oriented and durable solutions to the external debt and debt-servicing problems of developing countries through, *inter alia*, debt relief;

(*d*) Reinforce actions at all levels to implement national strategies for sustainable food security, including the development of actions to mobilize and optimize the allocation and utilization of resources from all sources, including through international cooperation, such as resources coming from debt relief;

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[3] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Records of the General Conference, Twenty-eighth Session, Paris, 25 October–16 November 1995*, vol. 1: *Resolutions*, resolution 5.4, annexes.

(*e*) Undertake further efforts to ensure that the development process is participatory and that development projects involve the full participation of all;

(*f*) Include a gender perspective and empowerment of women and girls as an integral part of the development process;

(*g*) Include in development strategies special measures focusing on needs of women and children as well as groups with special needs;

(*h*) Strengthen, through development assistance in post-conflict situations, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconciliation processes involving all engaged in conflicts;

(*i*) Incorporate capacity-building in development strategies and projects to ensure environmental sustainability, including preservation and regeneration of the natural resource base;

(*j*) Remove obstacles to the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination, in particular of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, which adversely affect their social and economic development.

11. Actions to promote respect for all human rights:

(*a*) Full implementation of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;[4]

(*b*) Encouragement of development of national plans of action for the promotion and protection of all human rights;

(*c*) Strengthening of national institutions and capacities in the field of human rights, including through national human rights institutions;

(*d*) Realization and implementation of the right to development, as established in the Declaration on the Right to Development[5] and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action;

(*e*) Achievement of the goals of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995–2004);[6]

(*f*) Dissemination and promotion of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at all levels;

(*g*) Further support to the activities of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the fulfilment of her or his mandate as established in General Assembly resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993, as well as the responsibilities set by subsequent resolutions and decisions.

12. Actions to ensure equality between women and men:

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[4] A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III.

[5] Resolution 41/128, annex.

[6] See A/49/261–E/1994/110/Add.1, annex.

(*a*) Integration of a gender perspective into the implementation of all relevant international instruments;

(*b*) Further implementation of international instruments that promote equality between women and men;

(*c*) Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women,[7] with adequate resources and political will, and through, *inter alia*, the elaboration, implementation and follow-up of the national plans of action;

(*d*) Promotion of equality between women and men in economic, social and political decision-making;

(*e*) Further strengthening of efforts by the relevant entities of the United Nations system for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women;

(*f*) Provision of support and assistance to women who have become victims of any forms of violence, including in the home, workplace and during armed conflicts.

13. Actions to foster democratic participation:

(*a*) Reinforcement of the full range of actions to promote democratic principles and practices;

(*b*) Special emphasis on democratic principles and practices at all levels of formal, informal and non-formal education;

(*c*) Establishment and strengthening of national institutions and processes that promote and sustain democracy through, *inter alia*, training and capacity-building of public officials;

(*d*) Strengthening of democratic participation through, *inter alia*, the provision of electoral assistance upon the request of States concerned and based on relevant United Nations guidelines;

(*e*) Combating of terrorism, organized crime, corruption as well as production, trafficking and consumption of illicit drugs and money laundering, as they undermine democracies and impede the fuller development of a culture of peace.

14. Actions to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity:

(*a*) Implement the Declaration of Principles on Tolerance and the Follow-up Plan of Action for the United Nations Year for Tolerance[8] (1995);

(*b*) Support activities in the context of the United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations in the year 2001;

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[7] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

[8] A/51/201, appendix I.

(*c*) Study further the local or indigenous practices and traditions of dispute settlement and promotion of tolerance with the objective of learning from them;

(*d*) Support actions that foster understanding, tolerance and solidarity throughout society, in particular with vulnerable groups;

(*e*) Further support the attainment of the goals of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People;

(*f*) Support actions that foster tolerance and solidarity with refugees and displaced persons, bearing in mind the objective of facilitating their voluntary return and social integration;

(*g*) Support actions that foster tolerance and solidarity with migrants;

(*h*) Promote increased understanding, tolerance and cooperation among all peoples through, *inter alia*, appropriate use of new technologies and dissemination of information;

(*i*) Support actions that foster understanding, tolerance, solidarity and cooperation among peoples and within and among nations.

15. Actions to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge:

(*a*) Support the important role of the media in the promotion of a culture of peace;

(*b*) Ensure freedom of the press and freedom of information and communication;

(*c*) Make effective use of the media for advocacy and dissemination of information on a culture of peace involving, as appropriate, the United Nations and relevant regional, national and local mechanisms;

(*d*) Promote mass communication that enables communities to express their needs and participate in decision-making;

(*e*) Take measures to address the issue of violence in the media, including new communication technologies, *inter alia*, the Internet;

(*f*) Increase efforts to promote the sharing of information on new information technologies, including the Internet.

16. Actions to promote international peace and security:

(*a*) Promote general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, taking into account the priorities established by the United Nations in the field of disarmament;

(*b*) Draw, where appropriate, on lessons conducive to a culture of peace learned from "military conversion" efforts as evidenced in some countries of the world;

(*c*) Emphasize the inadmissibility of acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in all parts of the world;

(*d*) Encourage confidence-building measures and efforts for negotiating peaceful settlements;

(*e*) Take measures to eliminate illicit production and traffic of small arms and light weapons;

(*f*) Support initiatives, at the national, regional and international levels, to address concrete problems arising from post-conflict situations, such as demobilization, reintegration of former combatants into society, as well as refugees and displaced persons, weapon collection programmes, exchange of information and confidence-building;

(*g*) Discourage the adoption of and refrain from any unilateral measure, not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, that impedes the full achievement of economic and social development by the population of the affected countries, in particular women and children, that hinders their well-being, that creates obstacles to the full enjoyment of their human rights, including the right of everyone to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being and their right to food, medical care and the necessary social services, while reaffirming that food and medicine must not be used as a tool for political pressure;

(*h*) Refrain from military, political, economic or any other form of coercion, not in accordance with international law and the Charter, aimed against the political independence or territorial integrity of any State;

(*i*) Recommend proper consideration for the issue of the humanitarian impact of sanctions, in particular on women and children, with a view to minimizing the humanitarian effects of sanctions;

(*j*) Promote greater involvement of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts and, in particular, in activities promoting a culture of peace in post-conflict situations;

(*k*) Promote initiatives in conflict situations such as days of tranquillity to carry out immunization and medicine distribution campaigns, corridors of peace to ensure delivery of humanitarian supplies and sanctuaries of peace to respect the central role of health and medical institutions such as hospitals and clinics;

(*l*) Encourage training in techniques for the understanding, prevention and resolution of conflict for the concerned staff of the United Nations, relevant regional organizations and Member States, upon request, where appropriate.

107th plenary meeting
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